



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2020

Navajo Nation issues “Stay at Home Order” for all residents of the Navajo Nation to fight the spread of COVID-19

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Friday, the Navajo Nation Health Command Operations Center issued a Public Health Emergency “Stay at Home Order” requiring all residents of the Navajo Nation to remain home and isolated and all non-essential businesses to close to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. The previous shelter-in-place order for the community of Chilchinbeto is now expanded to the entire Navajo Nation.

“We are getting many reports of people still being out in public and putting elders and everyone at risk. This is a very serious situation and if need be, we will take steps to enforce the “Stay at Home Order” even more. The more people go out in public, the greater the risk is for a massive health crisis on the Navajo Nation. We are telling our people to stay home to protect themselves and others, which will help our health professional take care of those who need medical attention,” said President Nez.

In a short period of time, COVID-19 has arrived on the Navajo Nation and the number of cases remains at 14 as of Friday. The degree of contact of contagious individuals and the subsequent degree of exposure is unknown and continued person-to-person spread throughout the Navajo Nation thereby poses an extensive and substantial public health risk, according to the order.

“While there are a higher number of people receiving negative COVID-19 test results for the virus at this point, there are many tests that are awaiting results and confirmation. The purpose of the closure is to allow the Navajo Nation as a whole to isolate and quarantine. Isolation and quarantine help protect our Nation by preventing exposure to people who have or may have the contagious COVID-19 virus. Isolation separates people who may be sick with COVID-19 from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick,” President Nez added.

The order also outlines provisions for “essential activities, essential businesses, and any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of essential infrastructure.” It further states that Navajo Nation citizens are required to stay home and undertake only those outings absolutely necessary for their health, safety, or welfare as described herein.

“It’s incumbent of every person to comply with this order. Our ancestors have been through much worse and we need to remember that. We are going to get through this with the power of prayer. Please continue to be mindful of our elders and those at high-risk. COVID-19 is extremely

dangerous for our elders, for people over 60. Think of the safety of our elders. Stay home,” added Vice President Lizer.

On Friday, President Nez and Vice President Lizer also approved a \$4 million appropriation that will be directed to the Navajo Department of Health to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Navajo Nation and deliver much-needed resources and equipment to health care experts and emergency response personnel on the ground. The funding will provide medical supplies, food and water supplies, equipment, public outreach, and more.

To view the entire “Stay at Home Order,” please visit: <http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/>.

#

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER
NAVAJO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
NAVAJO OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION PROGRAM**

March 20, 2020

Public Health Emergency Order No. 2020-003

Public Health Emergency Stay at Home (Shelter in Place) Order for All Residents of the Navajo Nation for Quarantine and Isolation Purposes to Limit the Spread of COVID -19

On March 11, 2020 the Commission on Emergency Management declared a Public Health State of Emergency due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in areas surrounding the Navajo Nation, CEM 20-03-11, stating: *"Locally, it is acknowledged and understood that the threat of transmission of COVID-19 needs to be mitigated to reduce risk of exposure to the Navajo People and the resultant consequential public health impacts."*

On March 18, 2020, the Navajo Office of Environmental Health and Protection Program, Navajo Department of Health, designated herein as the Regulatory Authority, in accordance with its enabling legislation CO-50-14, declared the current outbreak of COVID-19 a condition of public health importance as a threat on an individual or community level and that can reasonably be expected to lead to adverse health effects in the community and which poses an imminent threat of substantial harm to the Navajo Nation population. (Public Health Order, *Public Health Emergency Order to Limit Mass Gatherings and Gatherings Due to COVID-19*).

In a short period of time, COVID-19 has arrived on the Navajo Nation and the number of cases are increasing at a high rate across the Nation. The degree of contact of contagious individuals and the subsequent degree of exposure is unknown and continued person-to-person spread throughout the Navajo Nation thereby poses an extensive and substantial Public Health risk.

To mitigate the risk and to preserve the public health and safety, all individuals living on the Navajo Nation must stay home or at their place of residence, except essential workers needed to maintain continuity of operations of the critical infrastructure sectors. (See <https://www.cisa.gov/critical-infrastructure-sectors>).

The purpose of the closure is to allow the Navajo Nation as a whole to isolate and quarantine. Isolation and quarantine help protect our Nation by preventing exposure to people who have or may have the contagious COVID-19 virus. Isolation separates people who may be sick with COVID-19 from people who are not sick. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

The intent of this Order is to ensure the maximum number of people on the Navajo Nation self-quarantine (showing no symptoms of sickness) or self-isolate (showing symptoms of sickness) in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible, while addressing the critically essential

needs of the Navajo Nation in order to minimize the spread of COVID-19 to the maximum extent possible. All provisions of this Order should be interpreted to effectuate this intent. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and creates an immediate menace to public health.

The supply chain must continue, and residents of the Navajo Nation must have access to necessities such as food and healthcare. The Commission on Emergency Management shall continue to assist in coordinating such emergency and disaster relief services in conjunction with the Navajo Department of Emergency Management and the Health Command Center.

THEREFORE NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant the power and authority set forth in the Navajo Department of Health enabling legislation CO-50-14 and in conjunction with Navajo Nation declared Public Health State of Emergency CEM-20-03-11:

A. All individuals residing on the Navajo Nation shall limit their movement within and outside of their immediate communities, as well as limit their contact with individuals who are not immediate family or household members. Individuals may leave their residences only to perform any of the following "**Essential Activities**":

- i. To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their immediate family or household members (including, but not limited to, livestock and pets), such as, obtaining critical medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional for an imminent health need.
- ii. To obtain necessary services or supplies such as canned food, dry goods, produce, pet supplies, meat, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residential living. When people need to leave home to obtain such necessities, they should do so in limited numbers and should at all times adhere to **Social Distancing Standards** (such as: not shaking hands, standing several feet away from other people, avoiding crowds, etc.).
- iii. To engage in daytime outdoor activity such as walking, hiking, or running, provided the individuals practice social distancing.

B. Visitors to the Navajo Nation are directed to return home immediately upon the issuance of this Order by the fastest and safest available means.

C. All businesses within the Navajo Nation, except Essential Businesses as defined herein, are required to cease all activities. Restaurants and food service establishments are limited to providing dine-out options only. To the greatest extent feasible, Essential Businesses shall comply with Social Distancing Requirements. "**Essential Businesses**" include: Healthcare Operations, Essential Governmental Functions and Essential Infrastructure (e.g. courts of law, medical providers for urgent care, public utilities, and critical school operations such as nutrition programs).

- i. Grocery stores, food banks, convenience stores, hardware stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and

vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other non-grocery products, wholesale and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.

- ii. Food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing;
- iii. Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals.
- iv. Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities.
- v. Banks and related financial institutions.
- vi. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, internet or broadband providers and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.
- vii. Businesses providing mailing and shipping services.
- viii. Educational institutions - for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, provided that Social Distancing is maintained to the greatest extent possible.
- ix. Laundromats.
- x. Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free food services to students or members of the public may continue to do so under this Order on the condition that the food is provided to students or members of the public on a pick-up and takeaway basis only. Schools and other entities that provide food services under this exemption shall not permit the food to be eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site.
- xi. Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences or other businesses.
- xii. Home-based care for seniors, adults, or children.
- xiii. Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children.
- xiv. Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities.

D. For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their residence to work for or obtain services at any "**Healthcare Operations**" including hospitals, clinics, dentists (for emergency care only), pharmacies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, home healthcare services providers, mental health providers, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. "Healthcare Operations" also includes veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals. This exemption shall be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare, broadly defined. "Healthcare Operations" does not include fitness and exercise gyms and similar facilities.

E. For purposes of this Order, individuals may leave their residence to provide any services or perform any work necessary to the operations and maintenance of "Essential Infrastructure," including, but not limited to, public works construction, construction of housing, water, sewer, gas, electrical, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services), provided that they carry out those services or that work in compliance with Social Distancing Requirements, to the extent possible.

F. For the purposes of this Order, covered businesses include any for-profit, non-profit, or educational entities, regardless of the nature of the service, the function they perform, or its corporate structure.

G. All short term lodging, including but not limited to hotels, motels, short term rentals (30 days or less), bed and breakfast establishments, lodges and retreats shall cease operations, unless otherwise authorized in writing by the Public Health Director for emergency or quarantine purposes, or to provide lodging for essential personnel. Specifically excluded from this Order are circumstances in which it is not safe or impossible for a guest to depart. However, there shall be no new bookings or reservations during the pendency of this Order. Furthermore, current reservations for the timeframe anticipated in this Order shall be cancelled.

H. Residential and commercial construction sites may otherwise continue to operate so long as in compliance with this Order in reference to Social Distancing Requirements and limiting persons on site to no more than 10 people at any given time.

I. For purposes of this Order, all first responders, emergency management personnel, emergency dispatchers, court personnel, and law enforcement personnel, and others working for or to support Essential Businesses are categorically exempt from this Order. Further, nothing in this Order shall prohibit any individual from performing or accessing Essential Governmental Functions. Essential Government Functions means all services needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government agencies and provide for the health, safety and welfare of the public. All Essential Governmental Functions shall be performed in compliance with Social Distancing Requirements, to the extent possible.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order declaring restrictions based upon the existence of a condition of public health importance shall not abrogate any disease-reporting requirements.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that it is greatly advised that the public take the following preventive precautions:

1. Navajo Nation citizens are required to stay home and undertake only those outings absolutely necessary for their health, safety, or welfare as described herein.

2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

3. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

4. To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places – elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hands or finger if you must touch something.

5. Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.


6. Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and cell phones).

7. Avoid crowds.

8. Avoid all non-essential travel.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that this Order shall take immediately and shall remain in effect through April 4, 2020 unless otherwise extended by the Regulatory Authority and or the Health Command Center.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORIES AND ORDERS WILL FOLLOW AS CONDITIONS WARRANT. SO ORDERED THIS 20TH DAY OF MARCH 2020.


Herman Shorty, Program Supervisor III
Navajo Office of Environmental Health &
Protection Program
Navajo Department of Health


Dr. Jill Jim, Executive Director
Navajo Department of Health


David Nez, Incident Manager
Dikos Nstaaígíí – 19
Health Command Center
Navajo Department of Health